

# **MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE BARTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**March 30, 2009**

The monthly meeting of the Berks Area Reading Transportation Authority was held at BARTA headquarters located at 1700 N. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Reading, Pennsylvania.

The regular monthly meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM by Mr. Mickey Roeberg, Chairman.

The following board members were present: Mr. Ron Seaman, Mr. Philip D. Rowe, Jr. Vice-Chairman, Mr. Gregg Bogia; and Mr. James Schlegel.

Others attending the meeting were: Dennis D. Louwerse, Executive Director/CEO, Kevin Hessler, Director of Finance, Robert Fletcher, Assistant Executive Director, Janet Weiss, Manager of Programs and Marketing, Vicki Weidner, Director of Special Services, C. Richard Roebuck, Assistant Executive Director for Equipment, Facilities, Projects and Systems, Richard L. Orwig, Solicitor, and Kathey Cahill, Executive Secretary. Others present were William Frees and John Doerrman from the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1345 and Darin Youker from the Reading Eagle.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Board minutes of Feb. 23, 2009 as distributed by mail, were approved on a motion by Mr. Philip D. Rowe, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Ron Seaman. There were no opposing votes and therefore the motion was carried unanimously by the Board.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO**

**In Washington**, the Omnibus Appropriations bill was signed by President Obama on March 11, 2009. The Omnibus provides funding to twelve (12) federal departments including U.S. DOT. It provides for \$71.5 billion for all transportation modes. We now await the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) formula allocation of the public transportation funds.

**In Harrisburg**, the budget debate continues. Due to the crisis budget situation, we anticipate that at best, BARTA's state funding will be frozen at last year's level.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mr. Rowe presented this report in Mr. Bower's absence

The previous report balance as of February 17, 2009 was **\$1,852,678.42**. The current cash receipts are **\$576,882.06**. ACH /Transfers into Checking Account were **\$976,171.00**. Interest earned: **\$3,540.03**. Total receipts: **\$1,556,593.09**. Total Funds available were **\$3,409,271.51**. Current checks issued were **\$886,201.18**. EFT/Transfers from checking account total **\$771,886.73** for a disbursement of **\$1,658,087.91**. Balance reported as of February 17, 2009: **\$1,751,183.60**

**The Board took a few moments to look over the checks from the past month.**

After reviewing the check register, Mr. Rowe had a couple of questions regarding checks that had been written. They were all answered satisfactorily

A motion to accept the Treasurers report was made by Mr. Ron Seaman and seconded by Mr. Jim Schlegel. There were no objections, and the motion was passed unanimously by the Board.

## **DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT**

Mr. Hessler presented his report.

The operating revenue for year-to-date ending February 28, 2009 was **\$3,754,585** versus the budget amount of **\$3,991,003** which means we're **\$-236,418** or **-5.9%** under budget. Our total operating expenses for the same period was **\$9,723,539** versus the budgeted amount of **\$10,146,238** which means we're **\$-422,699** or **-4.1%** under budget. The operating deficit for the year-to-date was **\$5,968,955** which is **\$-186,280** or **-3.0%** under budget.

## **COMMITTEE & STAFF REPORTS**

### **Operations Report**

Mr. Fletcher presented this report.

The operating data for February 2009 indicates that the total system ridership increased by **.7%** when compared to February 2008. There was a **.6%** increase in the fixed route passengers and a **1.2%** increase in special service passengers. For the month of February on the fixed route service, we experienced a **.6%** increase in the revenue passengers, and a **2.8%** increase in senior citizen rides.

In the fixed route division there were 20 weekdays and 4 Saturdays operated in February 2009 as compared to 21 weekdays and 4 Saturdays in February, 2008. In the special services division there were 20 weekdays operated in February 2008 as compared to 21 weekdays operated in February 2008.

The average weekday ridership for February, 2009 was 10,108 as compared to 9,578 in February, 2008.

For the fiscal year, the total system ridership increased **4.4%**. The fixed route ridership has increased **4.6%**. This is composed of a **5.3%** increase in revenue passengers and a **2.0%** increase in senior citizen rides. The special service passengers increased **1.7%**.

A brief discussion followed regarding the increased ridership statistics and the BARTA Transportation Center's contribution to maintaining riders.

### **Special Services Report**

Ms. Weidner presented this report.

The report showed that the total Special Services Division ridership for February was **17,034**; a **1.2%** increase compared to the same month of 2008. Year-to-date figures show a **1.7%** increase when compared to the last fiscal year. With twenty (20) operating days, an average of 851 passengers were transported per day.

## **Special Projects Report**

Mr. Roebuck presented this report.

**Shared-Ride Software Technology Project** – The first phase of the Shared-Ride Software Technology project is working very well. We are continuing to make minor adjustments and fine tuning. Phase two of the project will consist of the mobile data computers being mounted in our vehicles allowing immediate transmission between the vehicle and the office. The drivers will immediately see information being transmitted from the office to their schedule as he/she makes pick-ups and drop-offs. We are currently finalizing our installation and training schedule, with an anticipated installation of three (3) pilot vehicles to be completed by the end of April.

**Fixed Route Vehicle Replacement Program** – Production was scheduled to begin the week of April 6, 2009 on five (5) 40' Hybrid-Electric buses. However, Mr. Roebuck reported that production would actually begin the week of March 30<sup>th</sup>. The buses should be delivered in May, 2009.

**Fixed Route Vehicle Replacement Program** – Production is currently scheduled to begin the week of September 2, 2009 on two (2) 40' Diesel buses. These buses should be delivered in October, 2009.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

The Board took a few minutes to review various articles compiled by Mrs. Weiss regarding issues relating to BARTA and transportation in Pennsylvania.

Phil Rowe asked that for the benefit of the new and old members that Dennis explain exactly on the 422 study, where it stops and starts.

Mr. Louwerse explained that there is a lot of misinformation regarding the potential tolling of 422. It actually begins south and east of Douglassville. Traveling on 422 in Berks County, is not limited access with turning lanes, traffic, and red lights. Any tolling would be where 422 starts as a limited access highway. Many people in Berks County would be able to take advantage of this. There will certain toll booths along 422, not like the turnpike system of having a booth at every exit. A certain number of toll booths would be spaced on 422 from there down to King of Prussia. These would be such things as Atlantic City Expressway where you could go through using an EZ –Pass. The whole plan is for traffic-flow. The proceeds from the tolling would not only provide for the R-6 rail extension but would also make improvements as relates to rail freight which will be improving within the line. It will also provide for highway and bridge improvements on 422. This is truly a multi-modal project. The importance of the next study, which is the actual revenue study, is to really get down to the numbers and anticipated revenue coming in each year. Then bond against that revenue, much like the Turnpike Commission. I think Mr. Rowe's point was very well taken and that it needed to be explained in a way that hopefully people will understand our goal.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Obsolete Vehicle Bids -** As we get new vehicles, according to Federal process, we are we required to put our retired vehicles up for bid. We received one bid for seven (7) vehicles from Nimco, a recycling business. We received a bid of \$374 for four (4) vehicles, and \$75 for the remaining three (3). If you get anything over \$5K for each vehicle, 80% of that money must go back to the Federal Government. Since we didn't get that, Mr. Louwerse asked that the Board accept the Nimco bids and put the funds generated into a disposition fund to be used help meet the local match for new vehicles.

A motion was made to by Mr. Rowe, and seconded by Mr. Schlegel. A vote was taken and was passed unanimously by the Board.

Mr. Rowe than made a motion that a resolution be made that allowed Mr. Louwerse to dispose of an obsolete vehicle for the bio-fuels project at Penn State (Berks Campus) subject to the solicitors review and given Federal approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. Seaman.

**Contract Purchase – 4 Hybrid Electric Buses -** Mr. Louwerse noted that at the previous meeting, we have four (4) projects that were approved by the Board as relates to the ARRA (aka: Stimulus Package) for a total of \$4,272,356. One project was for rehabilitation and preventive maintenance at the BTC. One is for additional video cameras for the vehicles. Another is for six (6) paratransit vehicles, four (4) of which will be hybrid, but those are still in the bidding process. And the final project is doing BARTA's part for going "greener" and reducing our reliance on foreign oil. That is the purchase of the four (4) 40 foot low floor hybrid buses for the fixed route system. These vehicles are needed for our planned service improvements. We have received option approval to purchase these vehicles from CENTRO in Syracuse, N.Y. Mr. Louwerse then recommended the award to the Gillig Corporation for the production of these buses at a cost of \$561,265 each for a total of \$2,245,060. (In addition, we will obtain related equipment and spare parts. The grant amount is \$2.4 million dollars.) All grants have been filed.

A motion was made by Mr. Schlegel and seconded by Mr. Bogia. A vote was taken and passed unanimously by the Board.

**Contract Fuel Purchase -** BARTA did a joint purchase with the County of Lebanon Transit Authority (COLT) and the York County Transit Authority (YCTA) that was publicly advertised and met all of the federal and state requirements. The IFB advertised for both fixed price and variable price requests. The document was sent out to twenty-five (25) potential bidders. The companies of Egris Oil Company and Isobunker, LLC have submitted bids. Due to the uncertainty of the fuel market, it is believed to be in BARTA's best interest to establish a fixed rate contract. The prices submitted were reviewed by the Board.

Mr. Louwerse recommended that the Board award the contract to Egris Oil Co. at the fixed rates. (\$1.949/gallon for Ultra –low sulfur, blended 2% Bio-diesel and 98% Ultra-low sulfur diesel at \$1.955/gallon, winter blend 70-30 additive at \$1.974/gallon blended with Ultra-low sulfur diesel and \$1.98/gallon blended with 2% Bio-diesel.) The contract period would be from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010.

A motion was made by Mr. Seaman to award the contract to Egris, and seconded by Mr. Bogia. A vote was taken and the Board unanimously approved.

**Purchase Replacement Copier –** The copier to be replaced was purchased in 1998 at a cost of \$17,840. Since BARTA is a member of COSTARS, we can purchase a Canon 4580i copier off the state contract at a cost to BARTA of \$15,505.

Mr. Louwerse recommended the purchase of the Canon 4580i from Fraser Advanced Information Systems, 320 Penn Avenue, West Reading, PA for the price of \$15,505.

A motion to accept the recommendation was made by Mr. Rowe and seconded by Mr. Schlegel. A vote was made and unanimously passed by the Board.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

**Resolutions of Appreciation** – Due to changes in the Board membership, Mr. Louwerse asked that the Board approve Resolutions of Appreciation to Mr. T. David Berry and Mr. Marlow Graff.

Mr. Rowe made a motion to approve and it was seconded by Mr. Seaman. The Board voted unanimously to approve.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathey Cahill, Executive Secretary for  
Jayne L. Dieruff, Secretary, Berks Area Reading Transit Authority